

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
100 MAPLE AVENUE
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2016

Mr. John Samia, Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee, and Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The meeting was convened at 7:00 pm by Mr. Samia.

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

Mr. Wensky mentioned that he had the opportunity to attend the Providence Bruins Ice Hockey game where the fourth grade students from Paton School were invited to sing *God Bless America* for the opening of the game. He noted the tremendous support from all the families that came to the event and he thanked Ms. Hannah Hall, music teacher, who organized the event.

Mr. Samia shared that the Committee taped the January episode of *School Talk*. Topics discussed included year-to-date information, the FY17 budget timeline, and technology innovation.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer shared he received a phone call from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) indicating that after reviewing the Statement of Interest (SOI) for a Beal School Building project, the MSBA technical staff would be recommending to the MSBA Board that they invite the district into the eligibility period at their meeting on January 27, 2016. He also reviewed the next steps the district would need to take in order to proceed.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. State of the District: Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked the Committee for the opportunity to provide them information regarding the state of the district. He indicated that his report consisted of four main points. First, he explained that students are thriving due to an excellent educational experience. He said the data indicates students excel on measures of academic performance, there is expert instruction and engaged learners, innovative use of technology, a wide variety of academic opportunities and successful co-curricular programs. He also noted the respectful and purposeful school culture where students can volunteer through many community service opportunities, student voices are valued and leadership is promoted.

Next he spoke about quality educators who are showing great success. They are extremely professional, consistently collaborate with one another, share best practices and demonstrate innovative thinking both with and without the use of technology.

He then discussed how the district's facilities are strong. He noted that the schools that were built since 1997 are among some of the best in the state. He explained that needed work is happening at other schools and they will require some additional significant work in coming years. He noted the exception of Beal which is in critical need but would hopefully be addressed through the MSBA process. He also noted the size constraints that exist due to a population bubble entering SHS, inadequate space at Floral Street School, not enough space for full day kindergarten and the need to rent space for preschool programming.

Finally, the demands, mandates and pressure the district is facing must be addressed despite fiscal constraints. While teachers and administrators have more access to information, best practices and powerful education tools, they are also faced with many challenges including accountability, curriculum standards, assessments, English language learner education, educator training, mental and behavioral health challenges, the addiction crisis, and a rising number of students requiring intensive programming. He then addressed the fiscal constraints such as unavoidable mandates, new policies, pressure from cost drivers such as healthcare, pensions and special education. He also noted revenue is disconnected from results that the state education finance formula is outdated, and local government's financial capacity is limited.

Dr. Magee asked for some more clarity regarding how the schools and the community can work together to benefit families with certain societal pressures and mental health issues. Committee members confirmed their agreement with Dr. Sawyer's assessment of the state of the district and that the issues that are present need to be addressed as they work through the budget development process.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

None

VII. Finance and Operations

A. Charter Schools & School Choice Report

Mr. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations presented information on charter schools, virtual schools, and school choice enrollment history as well as tuition, aid, and net cost history to illustrate the financial impact they have on our district. Highlights of the report included the growing population for Virtual School, charter school enrollment is declining, the lack of reimbursement from the state, and statistics show that the school choice program is flat with no decline or increase. Mr. Collins explained that the total net cost for Charter and School Choice is just over \$1 million.

School Committee members asked for clarification regarding why students choose virtual schools, if the number has increased, why the cost is more and, finally, made a request to see a presentation on virtual schools to gain a greater understanding of the program.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

A. Assabet Valley Collaborative Quarterly Update

In accordance with the state regulations of providing quarterly updates, Dr. Sawyer enclosed information regarding the purpose of the Collaborative, and the various services provided. He also noted the inclusion of the Collaborative's annual report and financial summary.

X. Approval of Minutes: Vote

Mr. Samia requested a motion to approve the amended minutes of the School Committee meeting on November 18, 2015. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on November 18, 2015.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:17PM.

XII. Information Enclosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for January 6, 2016. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes.

Respectfully submitted
Kimberlee Cantin, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. State of the District Report and Slide Presentation
2. Charter Schools & School Choice Report and Slide Presentation
3. Assabet Valley Collaborative Annual Report and Financial Summary